THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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No. 95

THE LOOSE ENDS OF EMPIRE

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Consultants D.K.Fieldhouse, Lecturer in Commonwealth History and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford; A.F.Madden, Reader in Commonwealth Government and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford

ROY LEWIS, author of the text sections of this issue, took degrees at Oxford and the London School of Economics. His distinguished career in journalism includes a stint as *The Economist*'s Washington, D.C. Correspondent; Commonwealth Correspondent for *The Times*, and, later, Assistant Foreign Editor, specializing on Africa and North America. His most recent book is *The British in Africa*.

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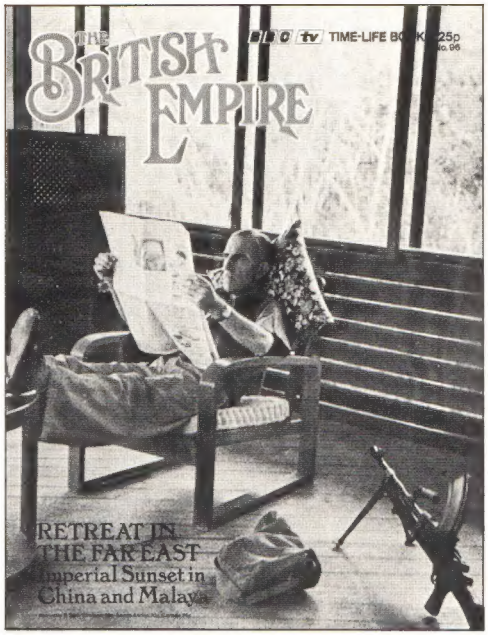

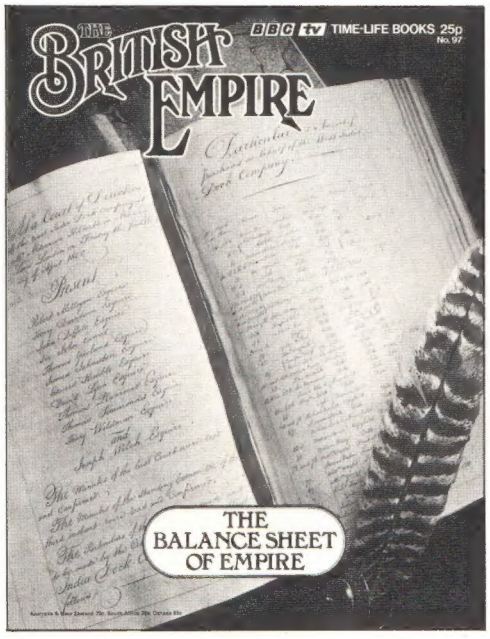

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THE LOOSE ENDS OF EMPIRE

Queen Victoria's statue sits sternly amid Hong Kong's neon signs.

Since 1945 more than 30 British dependencies, with a total population of over 700 million, have become independent. The Empire has vanished, but for Britain its shadow remains, giving rise to social and diplomatic problems that will not easily be resolved. At home, the controversy over Commonwealth immigration is a major legacy of the imperial past, while abroad there are territories for which Britain has to accept continuing responsibility: Hong Kong, Gibraltar, British Honduras, the Falkland Islands, the associated states in the Caribbean, 14 other island dependencies – and the rebel colony of Rhodesia. Most are sources of diplomatic embarrassment to Britain and threaten to remain so for years to come

By Roy Lewis

Great empires do not vanish overnight, even when their owners lose interest in as well as control of them. They leave a debris of human, cultural and territorial problems. In the wake of the collapse of the great 19th-Century maritime empires, the Spaniards are still involved in Africa, the Dutch in the West Indies and the French, like the British, have odd lots of real estate scattered over the world's oceans. Britain, however, has the biggest imperial hangover because her Empire was the largest. Its remnants continue to excite the wrath of anti-colonialists and to involve the British government in entanglements and disputes in every part of the world.

To many in Britain, the worst legacy of the Empire is coloured immigration, with its supposedly associated problems of overcrowding, job competition and clash of cultures. To the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, however, the problem remains that of disengagement and withdrawal from territories which are still inconveniently coloured red on the map. Hampering and embarrassing British diplomacy, they are regarded in Whitehall much as Disraeli regarded the British colonies of over a century ago: as "millstones round our necks."

The problem for Disraeli's successors began in 1960 when the General Assembly of the United Nations, fortified by the recently independent colonies of France, Holland and Britain, passed Resolution 1514, which called upon the colonial powers to grant their remaining dependencies immediate "self-determination." This directive gave colonial peoples a choice: either to become totally independent or to become an integral part of the mother-country – paying the same taxes, receiving the same benefits, and being represented in the same parliament (assuming there was one). The notion that neither alternative might be acceptable to some communities was not entertained at all.

The colonial powers were expected to provide an opportunity for their dependencies to choose by election or referendum one or other of the two alternatives. Size, or economic or social conditions were not to stand in the way of immediate decolonization. By definition, a colony

This map shows the decline of the British Empire over the last 50 years. The Empire at its height, in 1921, is marked in pink, the remaining dependencies in red type.

was a dependency separated by water and – unless the General Assembly were to decide otherwise – no contiguous territory, however oppressed, could qualify for "self-determination."

Resolution 1514 was to have momentous results. Its implementation has been closely supervised by the U.N. so-called "Fourth Committee," which among other things deals with colonial matters, notably with countries under trusteeship (former League of Nations mandates) such as New Guinea or South West Africa (Namibia). In 1961 a special committee of 17 states (later 24), the "anti-colonial committee," was established to report to the Fourth Committee on the implementation of Resolution 1514, for which purpose it was given funds to travel to colonial countries in order to hear local petitioners on the spot. The current membership of this body of colonial experts includes Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Syria and the U.S.S.R.

This special committee, also known as the "Committee of Twenty-Four," showed its mettle in 1967 by proposing to the General Assembly a resolution, which was adopted, defining colonialism as "a crime against humanity." Since a colony is what the special committee says it is under the loose definition of Resolution 1514 – a dependency separated from the imperial country by water – the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are British colonies. Their retention by the British Crown, therefore, presumably constitutes a crime against humanity.

For all this solemn idiocy, the Committee of Twenty-Four has had an influence in the lobbies of the United Nations that extends far beyond colonial matters. By putting colony-ownership permanently in the wrong, it ensures that any colonial power that wants something done through the United Nations finds itself bogged down in arguments over its progress in advancing its remaining colonies to independence. By the late 1960s the practical difficulties of decolonizing many of the remaining territories were growing. Although Britain was ready to waive objections to the granting of independence to places she considered too small or weak to survive alone, the colonials themselves were often unwilling to accept it; in other instances

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IMPERIAL OASIS

The island of Hong Kong, ceded to Britain in 1842, and its coastal territories remain an imperial oasis in the side of Red China. In 1945 its population was a mere 600,000, but swarms of refugees from the Communist régime have swelled the total to four million, giving it the world's highest population density – 8,000 per square mile.

Although Hong Kong's economy is booming, the colony remains politically and socially backward, and Britain is anxious to be rid of it as soon as possible. But China is grateful for the hard currency she is able to earn by selling Hong Kong food and raw materials and, despite Communist rioting in the colony in 1967, has shown no wish to recover it before Britain's lease ends in 1998.

This view of thriving Hong Kong harbour shows the business district of

Victoria in the foreground and Kowloon peninsula across the bay.

Aberdeen harbour provides cramped quarters for Hong Kong fishermen.

Shoppers throng the colourful main street of the Kai Tek district.

Washing drapes the blocks that help to house Hong Kong's millions.

Hong Kong police take a demonstrator into custody during the fierce rioting that swept the colony in May, 1967, in the wake of China's "Cultural Revolution."

both Britain and the colonials were willing, but some other power was opposed to change or wanted to take over the colony itself.

Forced to grapple with difficulties of this kind, Whitehall did not take kindly to the admonitory gyrations of "anti-colonial" powers often unable to work together on any other issue and usually unable to secure law and order at home on a democratic basis. In 1972 Britain withdrew from the special committee, though this did little to relieve her difficulties at the United Nations, where the votes of 44 African, 34 Asian and, on occasion, 20 Latin-American states can be mobilized against her on *any* issue, if anyone has a colonial grievance on their minds. Britain would certainly like to be rid of these burdensome imperial remnants, but she is unable to relinquish many of them without breaking faith with their inhabitants. She accepts a continuing obligation to protect the peoples of dependencies claimed by other countries and is still grappling with the consequences of rebellion in tiny Anguilla and Rhodesia.

The British dependencies claimed by other countries are: Hong Kong, destined to revert to China; Gibraltar, demanded by Spain; British Honduras, demanded by Guatemala; and the Falkland Islands, demanded by Argentina. Of these, Hong Kong is by far the most important. It contains more than four million of Britain's five million remaining colonial subjects. An enclave in the side of Maoist China, the colony is at China's mercy. Its land frontier with China is held by no more than a couple of British battalions and it depends on China for its food and water.

Hong Kong has made very little progress towards local elective government and, although its governor has an advisory council, the colony is economically and to a large extent politically controlled by a small group of extremely rich Chinese businesssmen and a smaller number of British companies. Its economy is so rich by Asian standards that it could sustain independence as well as Singapore does. Its situation is, therefore, everything that the U.N. special committee finds reprehensible.

In 1971, however, the Chinese government asked the committee to cease concerning itself in the matter, and it promptly complied with this request. China bluntly told it that Hong Kong was a question between herself and the "occupying power."

Unlike that of most other colonies, the legal future of Hong Kong is predictable. The original colony, consisting of Victoria Island, was ceded in perpetuity to Queen Victoria in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking, which ended the Opium War.

The British converted it from mud-banks into a prosperous city, thriving partly on the opium trade. The expanding port needed more space. In 1860, the Kowloon peninsula was ceded to Britain by the Emperor, and in 1898 a 99-year lease of the adjacent part of the mainland known as the new territories was negotiated. Economic growth has made an indivisible metropolitan area of the whole, so that when the lease expires in 1998, the island will also have to be given back to China. China could, of course, foreclose on the lease at any time, using any of the anti-colonial arguments propounded by the Committee of Twenty-Four. Most observers doubt that she will.

Paradoxically, China has considerable interest in perpetuating the colony in the teeth of everything that the committee has said, and, indeed, in defiance of growing *British* convictions that Hong Kong is an embarrassment and ought to be abandoned. When the British regained the colony after the years of wartime occupation by the Japanese, they found it lacking even adequate supplies of food and water. But the population grew under the Union Jack. In 1950, when the Communist armies triumphed over Chiang Kai-shek's forces on the Chinese mainland, refugees poured in until the Peking government sealed the frontier.

As the refugee Chinese capitalists put their skills to work, the colony prospered; no economy in the world has shown more vitality and growth than that of Hong Kong during the past two decades. This prosperity suits Communist China because the colony imports large quantities of food, water and raw materials from China and pays for them in badly needed foreign exchange. Communist China has also developed a nexus of investments inside the colony, including its own Bank of China. Indeed, Hong Kong is one of the vital economic foundations on which China's growing industrial power and developing nuclear capacity has been built – particularly since the split with the Soviet Union and the rejection of Russian technical aid in the early 1960s.

It looked, in 1967, as if China was about to sacrifice economic prosperity for the sake of the "Cultural Revolution." Inspired by Chairman Mao's teachings, the Red Guards tried to re-create the purity of the Revolution and expunge "bourgeois" elements from Chinese life. Chinese Communists rioted inside Hong Kong as they did in neighbouring Portuguese Macao. But whereas the Portuguese capitulated and now control their colony in name only, the British authorities were able to jail the rioters and lawbreakers, while China took the relatively mild revenge of imprisoning a handful of innocent British citizens in China.

The certainty of eventual Chinese control of Hong Kong has hindered political development in the colony. While the people of other colonies agitated yearly for the progressive transfer of power to local nationalist parties as a prelude to full independence, the people of Hong Kong developed no effective political parties or anti-colonial opposition. Had they done so, the supporters of Chiang Kai-shek might have opposed growth of a Communist movement within the colony, and the ensuing violence might have forced Peking to complain of misgovernment and to intervene – a situation that would have suited nobody.

Constitutional reforms in 1952 aimed at more representative government, but these have done nothing to stimulate political activity. Two political "societies," the Reform Club and the Civil Association, are mere shadows of parties. Of the 25,000 eligible to vote in local elections, only a few thousand have ever visited the polling-booths. One result is that the British administration is often out of touch with the vast, mainly non-English-speaking population and takes its advice mostly from an active group of rich Chinese businessmen, who are ready to serve as nominated members of the executive and legislative councils.

These leaders do not press for independence, since it would bring their own destruction. For this and other reasons, Hong Kong is not only backward in welfare and social services, but tolerates abuses barely recognized by the governor and his white officials.

The average number of hours worked per loom is twice that in Australia and a third more than in Japan. Educational and health services are limited, though the Chinese are learning English in growing numbers. Corruption abounds, and is hard to trace, let alone remove, in the tightly-knit fabric of Chinese family life. There is little ventilation of grievances, of which probably the most acute turn upon the shortage of housing. With all its riches, the colonial régime has found it hard to build fast enough for a population of four million with a high birth-rate and a falling death-rate.

The Chinese in the legislature resist labour legislation and effectively block any attempt to impose taxation (for example, to pay for the British garrison), tariffs and, above all, currency regulation. Hong Kong was always a yawning hole in the defences of the Sterling Area while it existed. The colony was a vigorous, if behind-the-scenes, negotiator concerning the terms of British entry into the Common Market. It is doubtful whether Britain gets any net profit out of Hong Kong.

On the other hand, the colony's British troops and residents are always potential hostages of the Chinese, providing Peking with a useful bargaining counter in any negotiations on the colony's future. There are also perhaps as many as one million Hong Kong Chinese who would be entitled to claim rights of residence in Britain if the Peking government decided to stir up trouble by seeking their expulsion from the colony.

Gibraltar is another colony whose future is tied by a treaty. The Rock, conquered by Britain in 1704, became a British naval fortress under the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713; but the treaty provided that, if Britain were to evacuate Gibraltar it must return to Spain. Spain always felt humiliated by the loss, and in ensuing wars tried and failed to reconquer Gibraltar. During the Second World War, General Franco declined to follow Mussolini into the conflict with Britain and France, and so lost an opportunity to regain the Rock, which, in 1941, he might have done, with unfathomable consequences for the course of the war.

But in the 1960s, as the process of decolonization gathered pace, and Britain surrendered position after position, Franco, by then in his seventies, began to take an interest in the reputation he would have in the history books. He suddenly advanced claims to Gibraltar, using the anti-colonial majority in the Committee of Twenty-Four to put pressure on Whitehall. Franco was careful, however, to guarantee British and N.A.T.O. security by offering to let Britain continue to use her naval base on the Rock under a long lease. He wanted formal sovereignty over the Rock and Spain's flag on its summit.

His legal case was founded on two points: that the grant of internal self-government to Gibraltar in 1964 was tantamount to a surrender of British sovereignty; and that Britain had violated the Treaty of Utrecht during the war by building an airstrip on the so-called "neutral ground" which lies between the Rock and the mainland. The cession of Gibraltar was demanded, of course, in the name of decolonization, even though this ignored the right of its inhabitants to self-determination.

Britain promptly offered to place the question before the World Court. Franco declined, and Britain has since argued, to his fury, that he thereby admitted that the Spanish case will not stand up. Franco threatened to "soften up" the colony and the British (if that were now necessary) by bringing sanctions against Gibraltar, and, over a period of seven years, he gradually cut it off completely from the mainland, from its Spanish labour force, and from its direct connections with Europe.

Pressure was put on shipping companies to exclude Gibraltar from the itineraries of their cruise liners. Spain also tried to put the airport (serving civil airliners as well as R.A.F. aircraft) and the harbour out of action. By banning flights over her coastline, she made approaches to the airstrip difficult – at times hazardous – and limited the types of aircraft able to use it. Structures were erected to inhibit landing aids and to add to air hazards. Spanish territorial waters were closed to British ships and defined so as to prevent access to Gibraltar's harbour – a point that Britain again offered to take to legal adjudication, pending which she ignored them.

The process was intended to force the Gibraltarians to give in as the result of creeping claustrophobia and economic paralysis. The contrary occurred. The Gibraltarians, traditionally friendly to Spain and often intermarried into Spanish mainland families, protested strongly against forcibly being turned into Spaniards and subjected to the tender mercies of an authoritarian régime whose economic and political policies aroused anything but enthusiasm. In a referendum of 1967 they voted by 12,138 to 44 in favour of remaining British. Franco then told the Committee of Twenty-Four that the Gibraltarians were not, in fact, the inhabitants of the Rock, but mere interlopers who had driven out the real Spanish inhabitants in 1704. (The committee agreed with this view.)

Franco complained, perhaps genuinely, that the institution of partial self-government in 1952 was a prelude to independence and, therefore, a breach of the Treaty of Utrecht; and he hastened to assure the United Nations that he did not consider independence to be an alternative to British possession. The Gibraltarians did not want independence either; they wanted only limited parliamentary institutions.

In 1968 Major Robert Peliza, head of the Integration with Britain party, turned out the local administration, led by Sir Joshua Hassan, for being too soft with Whitehall over the danger of bartering away the Gibraltarians' rights as British citizens. He forced the British government to state that it would never surrender Gibraltar without the consent of the inhabitants. When Gibraltar was finally isolated by Franco, the Gibraltarians set to work to do the jobs previously done by mainland Spaniards; and when that proved rather too much, they opened these job opportunities to Moroccans. Spain had secured African support in the United Nations by giving independence

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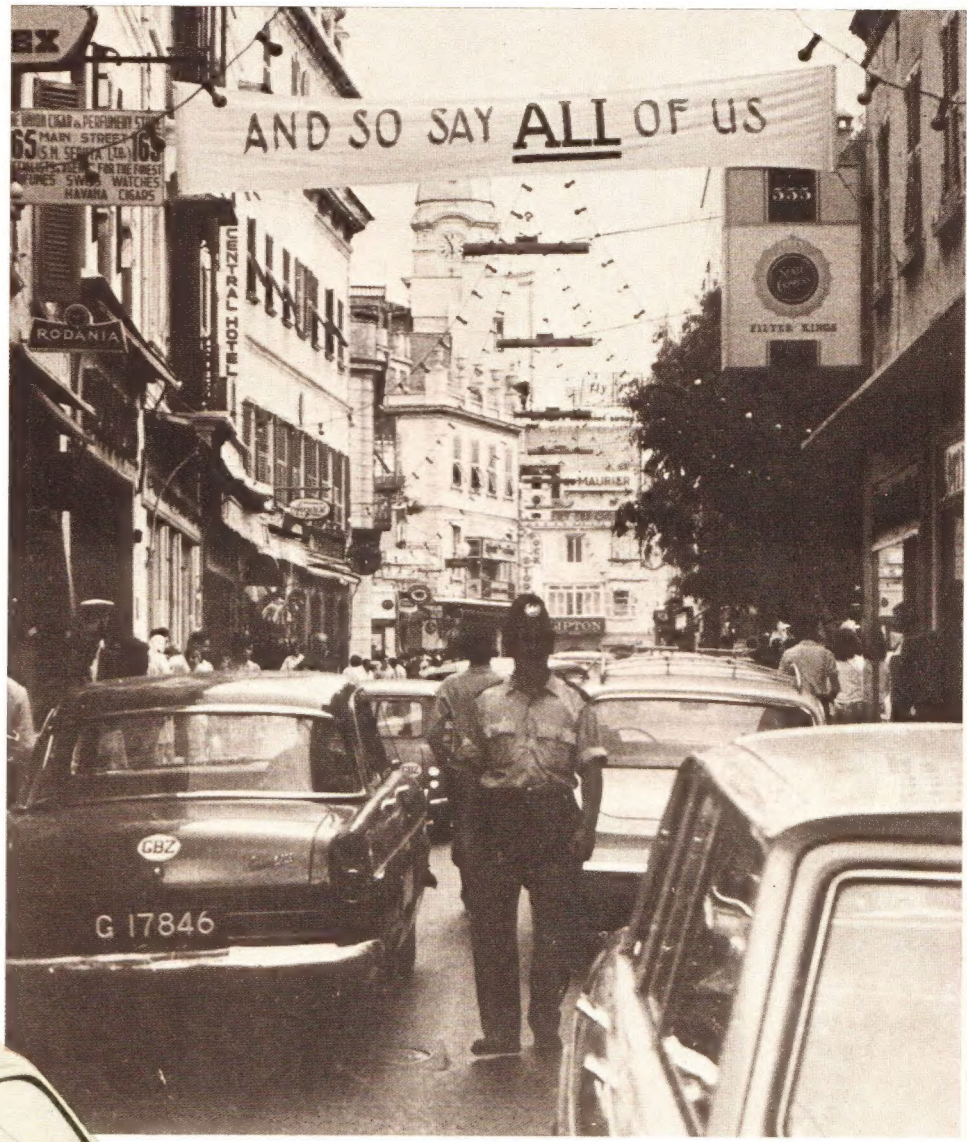
LOYAL ROCK

Gibraltar, a British colony since 1713, once served the British sea route to imperial India. Although Spain lays claim to the Rock, it is retained by Britain at the behest of the Gibraltarians. In 1967 Britain attempted to satisfy United Nations opinion by holding a referendum on the colony's future. By 12,138 votes to 44, the Gibraltarians opted to remain British and were pledged Britain's continuing support.

General Franco retaliated by severing the Rock's communications with the mainland and depriving it of Spanish labour. Today, the Rock stands isolated, but still British.



A banner in Gibraltar's main street proclaims solidarity with Britain.

A Gibraltar car driver displays a Union Jack next to the results of the 1967 referendum. The front wing bears the date of Britain's capture of the Rock from Spain.

Spanish workers are checked at the fontier before its closure in 1969.

A Union Jack serves as a rousing campaign symbol in the 1967 vote.

Mainland workers cross to Gibraltar in the now defunct ferry from Algeciras. Franco's isolation of the Rock cut its labour force by one-third.

to Rio Muni and Fernando Po, but Morocco did not enter the Spanish camp because of the remaining Spanish enclaves in Morocco – Ceuta and Melilla.

Franco persuaded the U.N. General Assembly to order Britain and Spain to decolonize Gibraltar, taking only the "interests," not the "wishes," of the local residents into account. Britain clung to the interpretation of Clause 73 of the U.N. Charter that the inhabitants' wishes must be paramount; the General Assembly disagreed. Since the value of the naval base was largely hypothetical, anyway, Whitehall seemed to want to clear the matter up, along with other unfinished colonial business, in the interests of British trade and packaged holidays on the Costa Brava.

But Spanish truculence incensed the British public, and the Labour government's attempts to work out a solution foundered on a burst of newspaper indignation. In 1969, a comparable wave of anger erupted in the government-controlled Spanish Press, which demanded annexation of Gibraltar in view of British intransigence. Spanish troops were concentrated near the Rock in some strength, and there existed the possibility of a modest armoured force quickly overrunning the "neutral ground" and cutting off the Rock from its airport – whereupon the U.N. Security Council would doubtless have ordered a cease-fire, leaving Spain with the airport, pending negotiation, and Gibraltar isolated.

A well-publicized British naval and amphibious exercise took place to study the defence of the Rock in modern conditions, and the Spanish Press exploded with complaints of British bullying. There was, indeed, no attack, and no more talk of annexation, but instead, a change of Spanish Foreign Ministers brought a temporary resumption of amicable talks with Britain which continue still.

The British hope is that entry into the European Common Market by Spain at some future date will ease the problem of the Rock. Meanwhile, Gibraltar remains under Spanish interdict. The Labour government's promise – "We stand as strong as the Rock behind you," and "so long as you wish to be British, British you shall remain" – is on the record.

Spain's claim to Gibraltar was paralleled at the United Nations by Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands, but the outcome promises to be rather different. The islands have been populated by Britons since 1833, after French and Spanish attempts at settlement failed in the 18th Century. The population is just over 2,000, and it produces little but wool; the islands were acquired for their strategic importance in the South Atlantic, an importance which was fully demonstrated by the famous Anglo-German naval battles of Coronel and the Falklands in the First World War and of the River Plate in the Second World War.

Their appeal to post-war Britain was, therefore, like that of Gibraltar, emotional. When, in 1967, it was rumoured that the Labour government was planning to relinquish the islands to Argentina, there was an outcry in Parliament and the Press, and the government hotly denied the rumours. In 1964, the U.N. General Assembly recommended that the decolonization of the Falklands should be arranged by direct negotiations between Buenos Aires and London. Hitherto, Britain had refused to consider a demand based simply on Spanish imperial claims dating from the 18th Century, or on the plea that the islands, though 300 miles offshore, were an "integral" part of Argentinian territory.

British consent, under United Nations pressure, to negotiations was hailed as a first triumph in Argentina, which had banned from Argentinian ports the ship which gave the islanders their communication with the mainland – forcing on them a 500-mile detour to Montevideo. Any Falklanders visiting Argentina were threatened with confiscation of their passports and conscription into the Army.

British trade was hampered, and Whitehall was coming to the conclusion that the colony's economy was unable to keep pace with modern industry; the migration of young Falklanders was not fully balanced by the intake of Ulster or Highland farm-labourers, and the woollen industry seemed doomed by the competition from synthetics. The Falkland Islanders' Company, which had a near-monopoly of the islands' trade and operated the subsidized shipping line, sought to withdraw the one vessel on which the islanders depended for access to Montevideo.

Some sort of rethinking was, therefore, under way when, in 1967, a group of young Argentinian patriots hijacked an airliner, forced it to land on a football-ground at Stanley and, under the amused eyes of the Falklanders (who offered the hijackers cups of tea), raised the Argentinian flag. The Argentinian government was less amused than the British Press by this episode and began to reconsider its strategy in the light of Spain's failure to intimidate the Gibraltarians. Some years later the embargo on British Falklanders' passports was lifted. The peace in which foreign communities lived in Argentina (including a Welsh-speaking group that has maintained its way of life for 100 years) was emphasized, and the wooing of the islanders begun.

Argentina agreed to shelve the question of sovereignty, and in 1971 reached an agreement with Britain jointly to build an airstrip at Stanley and to replace the steamer services with an airline offering concession fares between the Falklands and the mainland. Whitehall is hopeful that events will favour the courtship, that the islanders will come to see that their future lies naturally with Argentina, and that a process of absorption will develop, helped by the precariousness of the islands' economy and the lure of higher living standards on the mainland.

One major obstacle, which faces any country seeking to absorb peoples used to a British way of life, remains: how to satisfy those people that they will continue to enjoy the civil liberties to which

A squad of Volunteer Guards in British Honduras parade fully armed in 1972, when Guatemala threatened to invade its borders. British warships warded off the threat.

they have been accustomed. Argentina has been unable to satisfy the Falkland Islanders on this point. It remains a stumbling block, though a new stage begins with General Peron's return to power in 1973.

Guatemala's attempt, in concert with the diplomacy of Spain and Argentina, to assert its claims to the colony of British Honduras (now renamed Belize) has also foundered over the issue of civil liberties. First settled by British seamen and indentured labourers in the 17th Century, from an early date it possessed British self-governing institutions, though these petered out when the colony attracted a mixed population of buccaneers, Negro slaves, Spanish-speaking *mestizos* (people of mixed Spanish and Indian descent), and Mayan Indians.

British Honduras has been administered by the British for the past 300 years. Nevertheless, basing its claim on the Pope's division of the Western Hemisphere between Spain and Portugal in the papal bulls of 1493 and 1506 and on Spanish insistence on its title to the land and coast throughout the 18th Century, Guatemala turned to the United Nations for help. (Mexico has a better claim under the papal decree, as the heir to the Captains-General of Yucatan.)

The Honduras situation has been complicated by the Colonial Office's attempt, after the Second World War, to bring the region within the projected West Indian Federation, along with British Guiana. That solution, however, proved to be quite unworkable.

The People's United Party, which in 1954 won eight of the nine seats in the legislative assembly at the first democratic elections held in the colony, split in 1956 into pro- and anti-federation sections. The group which was opposed to British Honduran inclusion in a West Indian Federation won all nine seats at the 1957 elections, and its leader, George Price, became Chief Minister. The Federation lasted, at any rate, only four years after its formation in 1958.

By then, the original settlers had been largely submerged by Negroes and Amerindians and the Spanish language had become as prevalent as English in the colony. Whitehall came to the conclusion that an agreement with Guatemala was the only possible way to settle the future of 100,000 people with limited economic resources. British Honduras, having no minerals of commercial importance, is a primary producer of goods – mainly timber – not in eager demand. Her chances of independent survival in the world market are low.

The hope grew in London, therefore, that British Honduras would become an autonomous unit in a Central American federation or common market. But George Price and his followers, despite having co-operated with Guatemala in the early and mid-1950s in order to put pressure on Britain to grant British Honduras self-government, had turned against any form of union with Guatemala, which had come under the rule of an oppressive military régime.

In 1968 an American mediator, Dr Webster, proposed a plan under which Guatemala would bind herself to respect the independence of British Honduras, but would, by an ingenious formula, take over its defence and foreign relations. By then, however, bloodshed and anarchy in Guatemala had increased the apprehensions of the British Hondurans, who perceived how tempting it would be to the Guatemalan military dictatorship to divert its own citizens' discontent by seizing British Honduras and claiming its "reunion" with the mother-land. An independent British Honduras, freed from all ties with Britain, would be unable to resist the Guatemalan embrace.

Led by Price, the British Hondurans rejected Webster's formula with such vehemence that the Governor, Sir John Paul, felt obliged to protest. His reaction suggests that Whitehall was disappointed not to be rid of the problem, but again British opinion was aroused and M.P.s insisted that the government should respect the wishes and aspirations of the British Hondurans.

Early in 1972 a large British naval force, engaged on "routine exercises" in the Caribbean, steamed at speed for the British Honduran port of Belize. The Guatemalans denounced British bullying in routine language, denying that any kind of invasion had been planned, and the British Hondurans became even more convinced that the world was not yet safe for small nations.

The failure of the West Indies Federation in 1962 and Trinidad's subsequent refusal to head a proposed "East Caribbean Federation" were a fatal setback to the attempt to create a strong, English-speaking state in the Caribbean able in time to take over all British responsibilities there. In 1967 Britain sought to create another option for her

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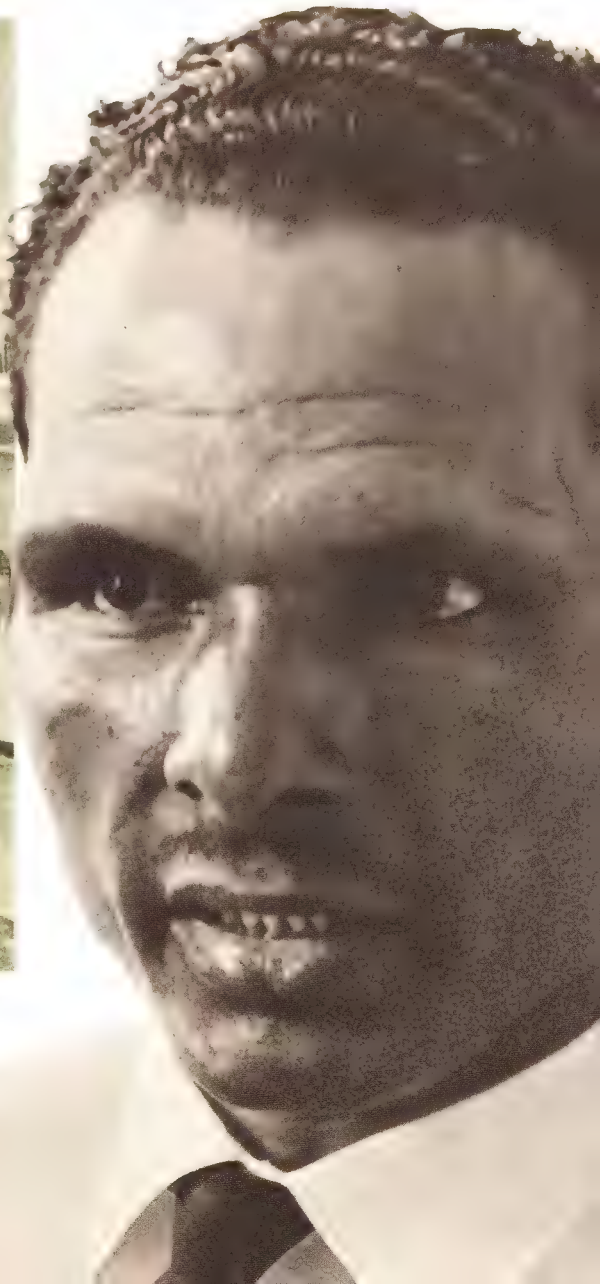
THE BRITISH RETURN

In 1969 the tiny Caribbean island of Anguilla, comprising 35 square miles and with a population of 5,000 farmers and fishermen, involved Britain in a comic reversal of her post-war pattern of imperial withdrawal. Two years previously the Anguillans, under the leadership of landowner Ronald Webster, had revolted against their inclusion in the associated state of St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla and declared their independence.

Although the British government still retained control of the associated state's defence and foreign affairs, it was reluctant to intervene directly. But its hand was forced in 1969 when the Prime Minister of the associated state, Robert Bradshaw, threatened to invade Anguilla. Fearing bloodshed, Britain forestalled the invasion by dispatching troops and 40 London police to the island. A Royal Commission report in 1970 failed to produce agreement between Bradshaw and the Anguillans, and although Anguilla technically remains part of the associated state, it has become, in effect, a British colony once more.

A paratrooper searches Anguillans after the British landing in March, 1969. The military withdrew in September, leaving only Royal Engineers to undertake development work.



Two British paratroops, relaxed but still armed, are inspected by a group of young Anguillans.

Anguillan children are welcomed aboard the naval frigate H.M.S. *Minerva*, as part of Britain's campaign to win the islanders' trust and co-operation.

Members of the London police squad that went to Anguilla as peace-keepers in 1969 cool off in the Caribbean – but still retain the symbols of their authority.

Ronald Webster, an ardent Seventh Day Adventist, assumed the title "President of the Anguilla Republic" when the island announced its independence.

tiny Caribbean island dependencies who would be too weak to stand on their own after independence. Seven of them, including the Leeward and Windward Islands, agreed to form themselves into "associated" states with full internal self-government.

The agreement provided for British control of their defence and foreign relations and increased financial aid. To avoid the charge of colonialism, the new arrangements were made contractual and each island retained the right to opt out by giving six months' notice that it was proceeding to full independence and assuming responsibility for its own defence and foreign relations.

The smaller islands, such as the Caymans and British Virgin Islands, were not included in this arrangement since Whitehall was as yet unable to envisage them as sovereign states in any circumstances. Meanwhile, the associated states were encouraged to join the Caribbean Free Trade Association ("Carifta"), formed in 1965. But in spite of Britain's attempts to avoid offending the anti-colonialists, the Committee of Twenty-Four denounced her arrangements with the associated states as a violation of resolution 1514 and demanded total decolonization – regardless of the islanders' own feelings on the subject.

Much more serious were the unheeded warnings of seasoned ex-Colonial Office officials, who pointed out that Britain's inability to control internal security would, in the last resort, make nonsense of her undertaking to conduct foreign affairs. In 1967 they were proved right when the tiny island of Anguilla, with a population of 5,000 boatbuilders, fishermen and farmers, objected to being governed from St. Kitts. St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla had been one administrative unit under the Colonial Office, but the Anguillans have more in common with the Virgin Islanders and they soon alleged that St. Kitts was neglecting Anguilla's economic development.

Negotiations went on for two years, but a British Minister who arrived in Anguilla to explain the advantages of federation with St. Kitts was sent packing and in 1969 the Anguillans proclaimed their complete independence. A civil war seemed imminent when Robert Bradshaw, the St. Kitts' Prime Minister, promised to suppress the rebels and began to look round for landing-craft.

A British cruiser, however, beat him to it and British paratroops and police landed in Anguilla. The British government alleged that outside elements were sending in arms, thus threatening the security of the St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla associated state and justifying British intervention under the 1967 agreement. There were genuine fears in Whitehall that undesirable elements were moving in on Anguilla, but Britain's right to intervene was dubious and it is unlikely that she would have invited the world's derision without very strong promptings from Washington.

In fact, the episode highlighted both British and American sensitivity to potentially malign influences in the area, whether Mafia- or Communist-inspired. Unconvinced by Britain's arguments, Bradshaw complained that she had interfered in his state's internal affairs and might well have turned the tables on London if he had given six months' notice of full independence under the 1967 agreement. He failed to do so, perhaps because he could not be sure of the necessary two-thirds majority in a referendum, perhaps because he had no wish to be saddled with full responsibility for St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla.

A commission of eminent West Indian lawyers, chaired by the Trinidadian jurist, Sir Hugh Wooding, was set up to consider Anguilla's future. It recommended that Anguilla be given substantial control of local affairs while remaining within St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla. Bradshaw accepted the report, but the Anguillans rejected it and in June, 1971, Britain, in effect, recolonized the island, though its relationship with St. Kitts remains formally in accordance with the 1967 agreement. Anguilla's future is obscure, but the islanders have benefited from the development work done for them by the Royal Engineers and seem content with a British presence that leaves them in control of their day-to-day affairs.

The wider colonial issues in the Caribbean also remain unresolved. The associated states are still condemned as colonial entities by the United Nations, while the tiny islands remain colonies even by Whitehall's definition. Britain's best hope of withdrawing totally from the region is still that one day the West Indies will take on her responsibilities. But tough realists like Dr. Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad, and Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, are in no hurry to do so, arguing that Britain has bequeathed them social and economic problems enough in their own countries.

Political pressures are slowly building up in other parts of the world where Britain still has colonial possessions of strategic importance. The Seychelles, Britain's only remaining colony in the Indian Ocean, has a community of 40,000 who produce little for world markets save coconuts. But the islands, ceded to Britain by France in 1814, have been galvanized into life by British efforts to make them a tourist paradise, and heavy investment has gone into hotels and an airport.

Delighted with their increasing prosperity and apprehensive of Soviet naval expansion in the Indian Ocean, most Seychellois are anxious for no more independence than that enjoyed by the Channel Islands. These moderate aspirations, however, do not conform with the line dictated by the Committee of Twenty-Four. It was General de Gaulle, anxious to win the goodwill of the French-speaking islanders, who inadvertently dragged them into the anti-colonial arena.

In 1965 he gave them honorary and symbolic membership of the French Community, *La Francophonie*, on the same basis as Quebec. By so doing he drew African attention to the colonial status of the Seychelles. Pan-African theorists claim that the Seychelles, like Mauritius and Madagascar, are part of Africa and the Organization of African Unity is now encouraging and financing a Seychelles opposition party pledged to a programme of total independence, while the Committee of Twenty-Four demands the right to send a mission of inspection to the islands.

In the Pacific Ocean are British possessions whose strategic importance was amply demonstrated in the Second World War, but whose military value in a Nuclear Age seems remote. Today sentiment rather than strategy tends to

dictate their relationship with Britain. Most were incorporated into the British Empire in the 19th Century at the request of their own chiefs, who feared the predatory designs of the rival European trading powers.

Britain, though navally supreme, was, as elsewhere, reluctant to acquire fresh territory. Thus the Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides was set up in 1887, and in 1898 the Sandwich Islands passed to the United States and, as Hawaii, is now a fully-fledged state of the Union. Nauru, with a population of 5,000 and a prosperous international trade in phosphates which gives it one of the highest *per capita* incomes in the world, became independent in 1968. Fiji and Tonga achieved independence earlier this year. The United Nations has grudgingly accepted that New Zealand's relationship with Western Samoa and the Cook Islands is non-colonial, although they are, in fact, associated states.

The fate of the Solomon Islands and its 166,000 inhabitants is bound to be affected by nearby New Guinea, to which Australia will grant full independence in 1974. The Solomons will hardly be able to retain their colonial status while the culturally much more backward Papuan tribes of New Guinea govern themselves. One possibility is some form of association with Bougainville, an island which the Germans detached from the Solomons and ruled as part of New Guinea before the First World War.

The Gilbert and Ellis Islands are perhaps the most remote of all the Pacific communities. The land area of the whole group is only 370 miles (Hong Kong is 398) and this is spread out over two million square miles of water. The population is 70,000. To devise a central elective government for such a small and dispersed people will be difficult. The creation of a viable economy could also raise formidable problems, since the phosphates of Ocean Island, the group's stable economic resource since the 1890s, will soon be exhausted.

But the economic future of these and other British island dependencies may become much brighter. The waters around the Gilbert and Ellis group teem with fish; mineral discoveries have now been made in the Solomons; and in the Falklands vast resources of kelp, a seaweed used in the manufacture of synthetic protein additives, lie waiting to be tapped. But the development of profitable new economic resources will almost certainly provoke the jealousy – and political antagonism – of much poorer emergent nations. The have-nots are unlikely to approve of any ties between prosperous new states and a former colonial power, even if these benefit the new states.

In October, 1970, the U.N. General Assembly adopted another anti-colonial resolution. This called upon the Security Council to undertake "the final liquidation of colonialism." There was no hint, in the light of so much experience, of any sympathy for the real problems of poor and scattered communities or for forms of genuine autonomy that would still preserve their link with those who know their problems best and can provide them with desperately needed administrative and technical help.

Of all the entangling bequests of Empire, Whitehall would undoubtedly rate the rebellion of white Rhodesians as the worst. Souring relations between Britain and black Africa and draining the Commonwealth of warmth and meaning, it also keeps Britain a delinquent at the United Nations. Although Rhodesia seized effective independence in 1965, it remains in law a British colony and Britain still bears the responsibility for securing the transfer of political power to the country's African majority.

The problem had been simmering since the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1964. The Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia sections became the independent and African-ruled states of Malawi and Zambia. But unwilling to create another South Africa, Britain withheld independence from the white-dominated Southern Rhodesia section of the federation. Considering this unjust, the white Rhodesians elected a tough government to obtain independence by negotiation. When negotiations failed, the government, led by Ian Smith, proclaimed Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of Independence (U.D.I.).

Smith, a Rhodesian-born butcher's son who received severe facial scars as an R.A.F. pilot in the Second World War, quickly established his ascendancy over white Rhodesian hearts; like most Rhodesian whites, he is convinced that white supremacy is the answer to Rhodesia's (and southern Africa's) problems and refuses to contemplate a hand-over of political power to the African majority.

Renouncing the use of force, the British government attempted to compel Rhodesia's return to constitutional rule by applying economic sanctions against the rebel colony. Backed by member-states of the United Nations, the sanctions policy still applies, though Rhodesia continues to hold out with help from Portugal, who has a stake of her own in Africa, and South Africa. Help has also come from some U.N. members prepared to ignore the U.N. Security Council's ruling on mandatory sanctions.

Three attempts to negotiate a settlement with the Rhodesians have foundered on the attempt to implement the principle of "unimpeded progress to majority rule." When, in 1972, the British and Rhodesian governments did finally agree on a constitutional formula for independence, the Africans rejected it. Repeated negotiations with the rebel régime have merely deepened African suspicions of British motives, and even if the Rhodesian blacks had accepted the 1972 formula for independence, the African-ruled states would assuredly have condemned it.

Their own formula, designed to ensure the speedy and total end of white supremacy in Zimbabwe, the African name for Rhodesia, is "No Independence Before Majority Rule" (N.I.B.M.A.R.). Pointing to the obvious failure of sanctions, the African states demand that Britain should use force to end the white settler rebellion.

Britain continues to reject this demand, but continues also to reap African hostility, particularly since Rhodesia's development into a racialist, authoritarian state that is wholly at variance with British tradition – ironically, the very kind of state which she originally wished to avoid creating. No solution is yet in sight, and the problem of Rhodesia promises to be the most enduring and least desired of Britain's imperial legacies.

U.D.I.

On December 31, 1963, the ten-year-old federation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved. While Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland achieved independence under African rule, Southern Rhodesia, now simply Rhodesia, reverted to self-governing colonial status under white minority rule, with a British veto on legislation directly affecting the black majority. Although white Rhodesians already had a monopoly of political power, they called for immediate independence: African countries and the United Nations insisted that majority rule must come first and Britain demanded guarantees of "unimpeded progress" to that end. But this promised to be a slow process and white Rhodesians were impatient. On November, 11, 1965, after a huge electoral victory, the Rhodesia Front government of Ian Smith (left) made its Unilateral – and illegal – Declaration of Independence.

A London news-stand sums up the story of Rhodesia's white revolt.

Rhodesian police keep watch on a group of Africans listening to the broadcast of Ian Smith's independence speech in Cecil Square, Salisbury. Demonstrations in London (below left) did little to worry the Smith régime, which received practical help from South Africa (below right).

Sanctions and Stalemate

When Ian Smith declared U.D.I. the British Labour government imposed economic sanctions against the rebel colony and froze its sterling balances in London. Resisting African calls for armed intervention, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, predicted that the Rhodesian rebellion would collapse under financial strains in "weeks rather than months." But Rhodesia's economy survived, boosted by trade with a sympathetic South Africa and with the land-locked neighbouring black state of Zambia.

Talks between Smith and Wilson in 1966 and 1968 failed to pave the way to a settlement and in 1969 Rhodesia adopted a new republican constitution, with a House of Assembly of 50 European members and only 16 Africans. In 1971, Sir Alec Douglas Home, the new Conservative Foreign Secretary, met Smith in Salisbury (right), and returned to London with a draft agreement. But it had to prove acceptable to black Rhodesians.

Demonstrators outside the Foreign Office in Whitehall in November, 1971, display their firm opposition to any settlement involving recognition of Rhodesian independence before the introduction of majority rule.

Dustbins scattered by opponents of the draft Anglo-Rhodesian agreement litter one of the routes to be followed by the commissioners assessing black Rhodesian reaction to the proposed settlement.

No Deal for Rhodesia

On January 12, 1972, a Royal Commission headed by the distinguished British jurist, Lord Pearce, arrived in Rhodesia to assess African reaction to the draft independence settlement reached two months previously between Ian Smith and the London government. The proposed constitution included acceptance of Smith's 1970 Land Tenure Act, which reserved half Rhodesia's land for the white minority, and separate electoral rolls, based on property, income and educational qualifications, which would have meant a prolonged period of white rule.

"We cannot accept any arrangement," said Bishop Abel Muzorewa, founder of Rhodesia's African National Council, "whereby 5,200,000 Africans are granted ten seats and a mere 25,000 Europeans 50 seats." African rioting greeted the commissioners and during the two months of its investigations, police killed 14 Africans and arrested 1,505.

In May, 1972, the Commission reported that, although the draft proposals were approved by Europeans, they were unacceptable to Africans. Despite protests from Smith that the Africans had been intimidated into rejecting the proposals, they were dropped by the British government. With the chance of a settlement lost, Smith denounced the British decision as "naïve and inept." The Rhodesian rebellion continues – and so do economic sanctions.

Police face angry Africans as the Commission starts work.

An official charged with sounding out African opinion on the proposed Anglo-Rhodesian

settlement, is given a clear, if slightly mis-spelled, answer by Africans opposed to those chiefs willing to work with the Smith régime.

THE EMPIRE COMES TO BRITAIN

A newcomer to Britain waits apprehensively to be fetched from London Airport.

As Britain shed her overseas possessions, she found herself confronted with an unexpected obligation to their inhabitants. Encouraged to work in Britain during a labour shortage in the 1950s, increasing numbers of Commonwealth immigrants – most of them coloured – claimed their right to enter the mother-country in the 1960s. But by then jobs were becoming scarcer and resentment against the newcomers began to build up in poor and already overcrowded urban areas. Race rioting in London's Notting Hill district in 1958 was the warning signal that Britain had a "colour" problem in her midst.

Police with dogs move crowds on in London's Notting Hill in 1958 after rioting by white youths demanding an end to coloured immigration.

Notting Hill teenagers take to their heels during the 1958 disturbances as word spreads that police vehicles are approaching the area.

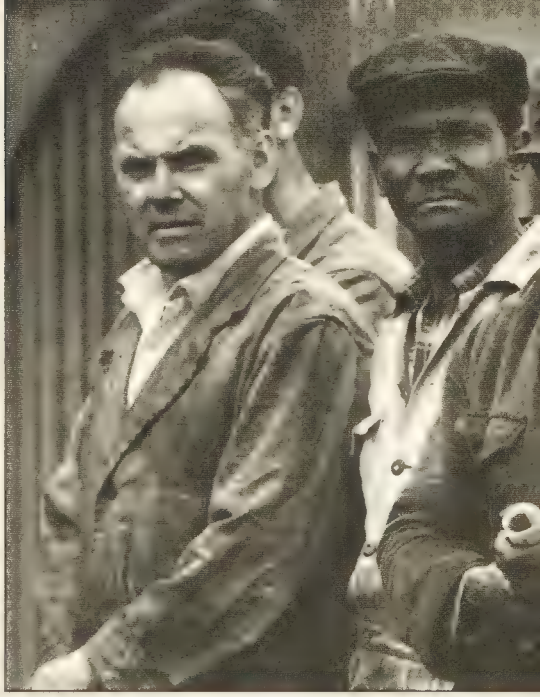
The Half-Open Door

In 1962 Britain's Conservative government passed the first Act restricting the entry of Commonwealth citizens to Britain. Intending immigrants were henceforth required to obtain work vouchers and these were not to exceed a figure of 30,000 a year.

Although the Labour Party opposed restrictions as being "disastrous to [Britain's] status in the Commonwealth," it introduced even tougher measures of its own after winning the 1964 election. Work vouchers were reduced to 8,500 a year and were made available only to those Commonwealth citizens with industrial skills or professional qualifications.

An Act outlawing racial discrimination in public places was passed in 1965, but Kenya's decision to expel Asians who preferred to retain their British citizenship led to the erection of fresh barriers. Perturbed at the possible consequences of another large immigrant influx, the government allowed free entry only to those Commonwealth citizens whose grandparents had been born in Britain.

West Indian children huddle together in a small, damp kitchen. Such conditions are characteristic of the poor housing available to coloured immigrants in Britain's overcrowded cities.



Black and white workers mix at a Wolverhampton
to find any but the most menial jobs, such as

A cheerless street in an immigrant area of London is disfigured by an almost senseless racialist slogan in a city that still has few coloured policemen.

factory. But many immigrants are unable minding machines or sweeping factory floors.

An Asian housewife shops in a supermarket stocking both oriental and English food items. One side-effect of immigration has been the spread of exotic eating habits among the British.

A Prophet of Doom

Despite the application of rigorous immigration controls, the contentious issue of coloured immigration continued to dominate British politics in the late 1960s. On April 28, 1968, Tory M.P. and former minister Enoch Powell startled supporters of all political parties with a speech prophesying disaster unless coloured immigration to Britain was halted completely. He warned that the country was "busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre," and urged that coloured immigrants already in Britain should return to their lands of origin.

The speech led to Powell's dismissal from the Conservative Shadow Cabinet, but he has remained a consistent and controversial advocate for those who believe that Britain's future stability is imperilled by the presence of a substantial coloured community.

Fresh fuel was added to the argument in 1972 when the British government decided to admit Ugandan Asians expelled by Ugandan leader General Idi Amin, provided they held British passports. By the end of the year nearly 30,000 Ugandan Asians, forced to leave the bulk of their assets and possessions in Uganda, were enduring their first British winter.

A group of Ugandan refugees pose with their British passports at Kampala, while waiting to make

Ugandan Asians queue for soup at a former R.A.F. base in Suffolk, where they were placed before finding permanent quarters.

Refugees arrive in London with few worldly goods, forced to leave life

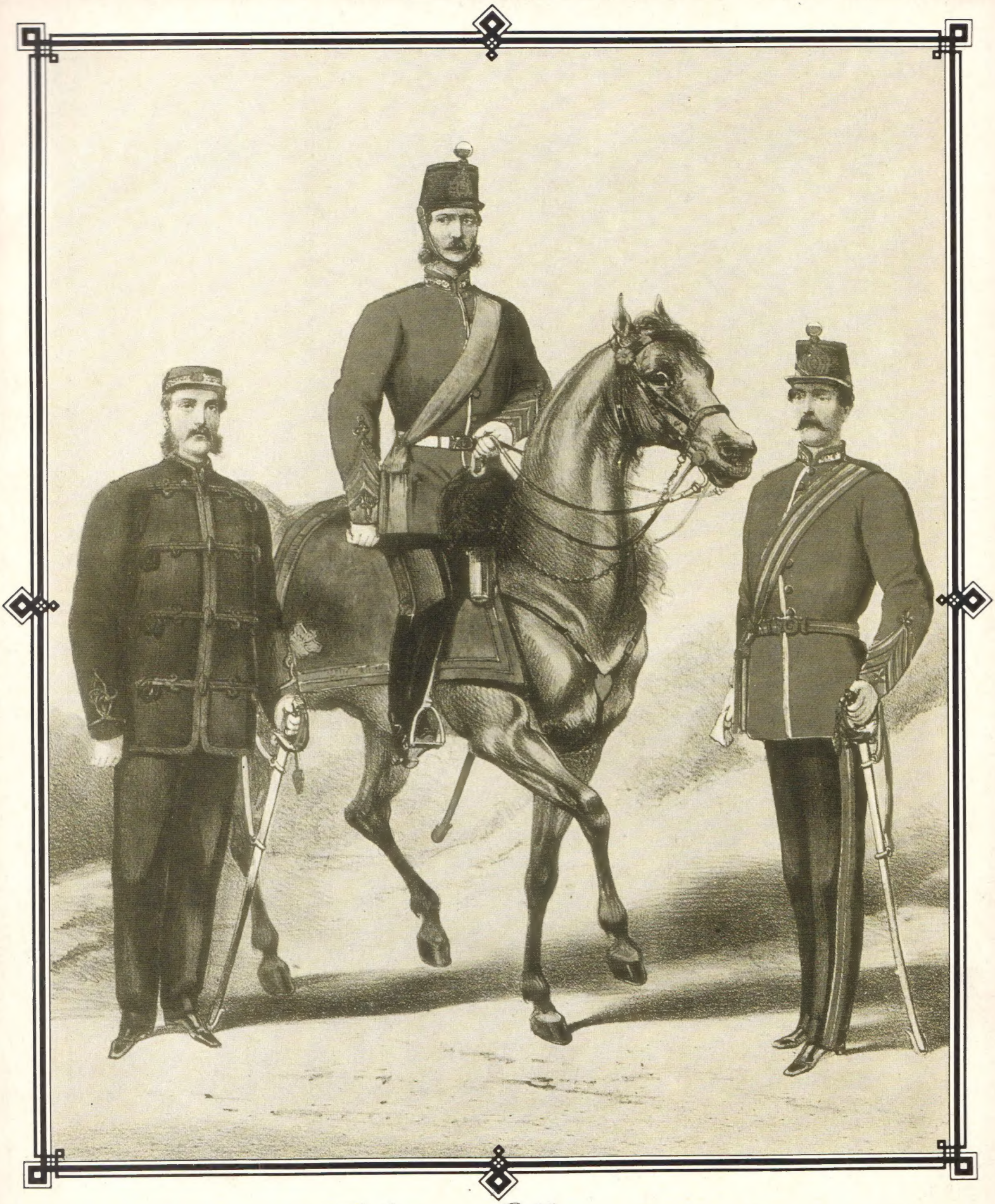
arrangements for their air journey to Britain.

savings and belongings behind them.

"As I look ahead," Enoch Powell declared in 1968, "I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see 'the River Tiber foaming with much blood'."

Heavily clothed against the cold English winter, an Asian couple, uprooted from a prosperous life in Uganda, face an uncertain future in their new country.

A delegation of Kenyan Asians marches to 10 Downing Street in February, 1968, to protest against the government order restricting the entry of their compatriots to Britain. Many throughout Britain's former imperial possessions still regard the mother-country as their homeland and refuge.



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